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BRIERFIELD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL
OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE URBAN
DISTRICT OF BRIERFIELD FOR THE
YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31ST. 1920,

Medical Officer of Health
Dr. JAMES STRACHAN WILSON, M.B., C.M.

Town Hall,
BRIERFIELD.

April 1921.

Brierfield Urban District Council.



*With the
Compliments of the
Medical Officer of Health.*

*Town Hall,
Brierfield.*

Town Hall,
BRIERFIELD
April 1921.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Brierfield Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting for your consideration my 17th. Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Conditions of the Urban District of Brierfield for the year 1920.

Possibly one of the most notable facts to be recorded in this report is the revival of the Birth Rate. The war, followed by the post-war conditions affected the birth rate in this district to a marked degree, and during these periods the number of civilian deaths recorded frequently exceeded the number of births. The past year witnessed a continuance of industrial prosperity, particularly in the cotton trade, and this has undoubtably given considerable impetus to the production of increased birth rate figures. It should be noted however that the rate for the year is still a good way below the average for the whole of the country.

Another point of more tragic interest is brought forward in the table of infantile deaths in another part of the report, detailing the preventable diseases which have caused the deaths of 15 infants under one year of age.

The number of cases of Infectious Diseases notified has again remained low. It has not been necessary to curtail the water supply for a single day during the year, the rainfall, even heavier than usual, generally having kept the supply reservoirs quite full.

On the whole the health of the Urban District has been quite good. I would however draw your attention to the fact that nearly half the deaths recorded in 1920 were due to respiratory diseases. Such a mortality as this pointedly suggests the effect of Brierfield's moist atmosphere.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS,

Population.

The population of the Urban District at the Census in 1911 was 3260, and at the outbreak of war in the summer of 1914 it was estimated at 3000. The upheaval then created prevented further increases; on the contrary the estimated populations for the four succeeding years were successively decreased. The Armistice, followed by a gradual demobilisation of many sailors and soldiers brought about a return of increasing population, and for 1919 the civilian population was estimated at 3426. In 1920 demobilization had reached a stage at which it was felt that the distinction between "Birth Rate" and "Death Rate" populations, made during the period when a large part of the male population was under arms, might be discontinued. Hence the Registrar-General has adopted 3734 as the population of Brierfield for the year 1920.

Physical Features.

The area of the District is 307 acres, of which 100 acres may be described as the "urban" or thickly populated area. There is a direct slope of 1½ miles in a westerly direction from a datum level of 860 feet on Marsden Heights to a level of 340 feet at Pendle Water. The "urban" portion of the district varies in datum level from 400 to 300. The rural areas occupying the elevated district surrounding Marsden Heights consist chiefly of pasture and meadow lands with a small section of moorland, and the chief products are milk and butter. There are also 400 allotment holders in the district with 35 acres under cultivation or in use as poultry runs, and these produce large quantities of vegetables and eggs, and thus materially help to keep up a good supply of fresh and wholesome foods for the district.

The whole of the populated area, most of which has been built during the past 30 years, is within easy access of the open country, and full advantage is taken by residents of the opportunities provided in the really pleasant countrysides in the immediate vicinity, and within easy walking distance.

Social Conditions.

The manufacture of plain and coloured cotton cloth is the staple industry of Brierfield, and there are 10000 spindles and 7500 looms employing 4000 workpeople engaged in this work. The mills themselves are quite modern and well built. A damp atmosphere is necessary for good weaving, and the clay subsoil under the town alone with the fairly heavy rainfall so far to bring about these conditions. During 1920 the cotton trade maintained a high level of prosperity which only began to decline during the last three months.

Births.

The total number of Births registered in Brierfield during the year was 172, 85 Males and 87 Females. Of these 5 female and 5 male births were illegitimate; the proportion of illegitimate births was thus 8%. For the year the Birth Rate was 19.5 per 1000 of the population.

This Birth Rate is an increase of 8.1 on last years ratio, and an increase of 8.2 on the average for the ten previous years. It is however 5.8 below the birth rate for the whole of England and Wales.

Deaths.

The total number of deaths registered in the District during the year was 85, while 13 persons, usually residing in the in the district died during temporary residence outside the district or in public institutions, making the total number of deaths belonging to Brierfield into 98, 55 of which were males and 43 females.

The Annual Death Rate is 11.1 or a decrease of .2 on last years rate. This rate also compares favourably with the rates for three previous years, which were 16.40, 12.10 and 13.40 respectively; it is also below the mean of the ten years 1910-1919, which is 13.00.

Infantile Mortality.

The total number of deaths under 1 year of age during the year was 15, 9 males and 6 females. One female was illegitimate. The Infantile Mortality Rate for the year is 87 per 1000 births compared with 79 last year, and 55 in 1918.

Details of the causes are set forth in the following table along with the ages at death:

Causes of Death	Under 1 wk.	1 to 2 wks	2 to 4 wks	Total under 2 wks	1 to 3 mths	3 to 6 mths	6 to 9 mths	9 to 12 mths	Total under 1 yr.
Measles							1		1
Vomiting					1				1
Enemnonia					1			1	5
Gast. Gastro					1				1
Oat, Entritis	1	1	2	4	1				5
2, I&E. Colitis					1	1			1
Convulsions	1			1			1		2
Gastritis	1		1	2					1
Brem Birth			1	1					1
Bronchitis					1				1
All Causes	2	2	1	5	5	2	2	1	15

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COMPARATIVE BIRTH AND DEATH RATES.

Table shewing the comparative Birth, Death, Epidemic and Phthisical Death Rates, and also the Infantile Mortality Rates for the Urban District of Brierfield for the past 10 years.

Period.	Birth Rate.	Per 1000 of Population.			Rate of deaths under 1 Year to 1000 Births.
		Death Rate	Epidemic Death Rate	Phthisis Death Rate	
1920	19.6	11.1	0.79	1.25	87
1919	11.5	11.3	0.11	1.06	79
Mean of 10 yrs. 1910-1919.	16.4	13.0	1.13	1.00	104
Increase or Decrease in 1920:-					
Previous Year	-8.1	-0.2	-0.68	-0.19	-8
Ten Years Avg.	-3.2	-1.9	-0.34	-0.25	-17

COMPARATIVE BIRTH AND DEATH RATES FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

Table shewing Brierfield's Rates compared with the whole of the Country for the year 1920.

-	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Infant Mortality Rate per 1000 Dths	
			Diarrhoea and Enteritis (under 2 Years).	Total under 1 Year.
BRIERFIELD.	19.6	11.1	23.2	87
England and Wales.	25.4	12.4	8.3	80
96 Great Towns.	26.2	12.5	10.4	85
46 Smaller Towns.	24.9	11.3	7.8	80
London.	26.5	12.4	9.5	75

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The following table gives the AGES AT, AND THE CAUSES OF all Deaths belonging to Erierfield during 1920.

Causes of Death.	All Ages	Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65	over 65
Measles.	3	1		1			
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	11			1	6	5	
Other Tub. Diseases.	1			1			
Cancer.	11					7	4
Organic Heart Disease.	12					10	2
Bronchitis.	8			1		5	4
Pneumonia.	14	3	2	2		5	2
Other Resp. Diseases.	2					2	
Diarrhoea (under 2 yrs.)	5	5					
Alcoholism.	1						1
Puerperal Fever.	1					1	
Parturition.	1					1	
Congenital Debility.	1		1				
Violence.	1					1	
Suicide.	1					1	
Other Defined Diseases.	25	5	1			9	10
Undefined Diseases.	1						1
All causes.		98	16	4	4	6	45
							24

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES.

Water.

The lower portion of the town is supplied with water from the Nelson Corporation Reservoirs, the supplies being derived from the gathering grounds on the Yorkshire Moors and on Pendle. The daily consumption for both trade and domestic purposes amounts to about 30 gallons per head, or 250,000 gallons for the District. The water is good in quality, and is very slightly hard. Isolated dwellings and farms on Marsden Heights obtain continuous supplies of good water from a series of wells and springs.

Rivers and Streams.

The Urban District lies wholly on the hillside with a westerly aspect, the western boundary being formed by Pendle Water, a small but swiftly flowing river which has its source in Oldon Clough on Pendle Hill. Its course lies through Barley, Roughlee, and Barrowford to Nelson where it receives Cline Water. Passing along to Nelson the stream receives the effluents of both the Nelson and Barrowford Sewage Works, and just as it approached Prioryfield part of the water is diverted near Quaker's Bridge and taken to Jewel Hill for industrial purposes. The loss of water caused by this diversion is liable to cause a slight stagnation in the river bed along the Prioryfield boundary during periods of prolonged drought. For most of the year however a fairly rapid flow is maintained, and few complaints are made even in the driest weather. Other streams and watercourses in the District maintain a rapid flow at all times making the possibility of a nuisance arising very small indeed.

Drainage and Sewerage.

The hole of the sewerage in the Urban District is on the "Combined System", and the slope of the land lends itself admirably in securing quick and regular flow.

Situated in the lowest part of the District and directly adjoining Pendle Water, are the Sewage Disposal Works. Treatment of the sewage is carried out on the Septic Tank and Double Contact Bed system, and a fairly good effluent is then turned direct into the river.

Closet Accommodation.

The closet accommodation of the district consists largely of fresh and waste water closets. The respective numbers of each type are:

Pail Closets.....	50
Fresh Water Closets.....	413
Waste Water Closets.....	1993

The pail closets are situated in the rural areas; in all new buildings fresh water closets must be provided.

Scavenging.

The scavenging of the Urban District is carried out directly by the Urban District Council employing their own workmen. Domestic refuse from private houses, shops and mills, and trade refuse from shops is removed free of charge. The house refuse collected is disposed of at the Sewage Works Tip, and the refuse from shops is burnt at the Nelson Corporation Destructor Works. Pail closets are emptied weekly, the contents being spread on the grass land on the Heights. Appended is a list of the scavenging work carried out during the year.

Domestic Refuse (Ashes) tipped at Sewage Works 2181 loads.

do.	destroyed at Nelson.....	5	"
Pail Closets Refuse spread on land.....	179	"	
Sweepings removed from Roads.....	557	"	
Grit removed from Street Gullies.....	139	"	
Shop Refuse destroyed at Nelson.....	161	"	
Scrapings removed from Macadam Roads.....	31	"	
Fish Refuse destroyed at Nelson.....	603	Pins.	
Slaughterhouse Refuse destroyed at Nelson.....	76	"	

Sanitary Inspection.

Inspections of the district were thoroughly carried out during the year, and the sanitary condition of the Urban District is quite good. No statutory notices were served during the year; the following table gives particulars of the defects found and the informal written notices served where necessary.

	Defects.	Notices
Leakage of water causing nuisance.....	1	1
Defective Tipplers.....	20	3
Defective Ashbins requiring replacement.....	15	9
do. Privy Pails requiring replacement.....	7	3
do. Roof Slates.....	1	1
Damp Walls and Ceilings.....	10	7
Defective Dishbricks.....	1	1
do. Closets and Tipplers.....	5	5
do. Ashpit.....	1	1
do. Fresh Water Closets.....	4	1
do. Waste Water Closets.....	108	12
do. Slop Pipes.....	4	4
do. Trap.....	1	1
do. Closet Drains.....	7	7
do. Downspout.....	6	6
do. Eaves Troughing.....	15	7
do. Cover to Coal Cellar.....	1	1
do. Yard Walls.....	2	1
do. Tank Closet and Ashpit.....	1	1
Accumulations of Manure causing Nuisance.....	3	3
Insufficient Water supplies.....	16	4
Flooding of Cellars.....	4	2
	252	79



Most of the defects found in the waste water closets have been temporary stoppages in the traps caused by the accumulation of solid matter of various kinds, and defects of this type are, if possible remedied by a workman from the Health Department with the aid of a rubber plunger. Notices are only served when this method of remedying such defects fail.

Premises and Occupations which can be controlled by Byelaws and Regulations.

There are no common lodging houses or houses let in lodgings in the district, and offensive trades are not carried on in the town. Chip and fish frying shops have been regularly visited and are kept in good sanitary condition.

Factories and Workshops.

The following inspections were made, and notices were sent as shown in the following table:

Premises.	Inspections.	Informal Notices.	Written Notices.
Factories.....	27	4	
Workshops.....	11	1	
	<u>38</u>	<u>5</u>	

Schools.

There are three public elementary schools under the Lancashire Education Committee in the Urban District; each is in good sanitary condition and good supplies of water are available from the mains. One private school is established in a large schoolroom; this has been inspected six times and found in good order.

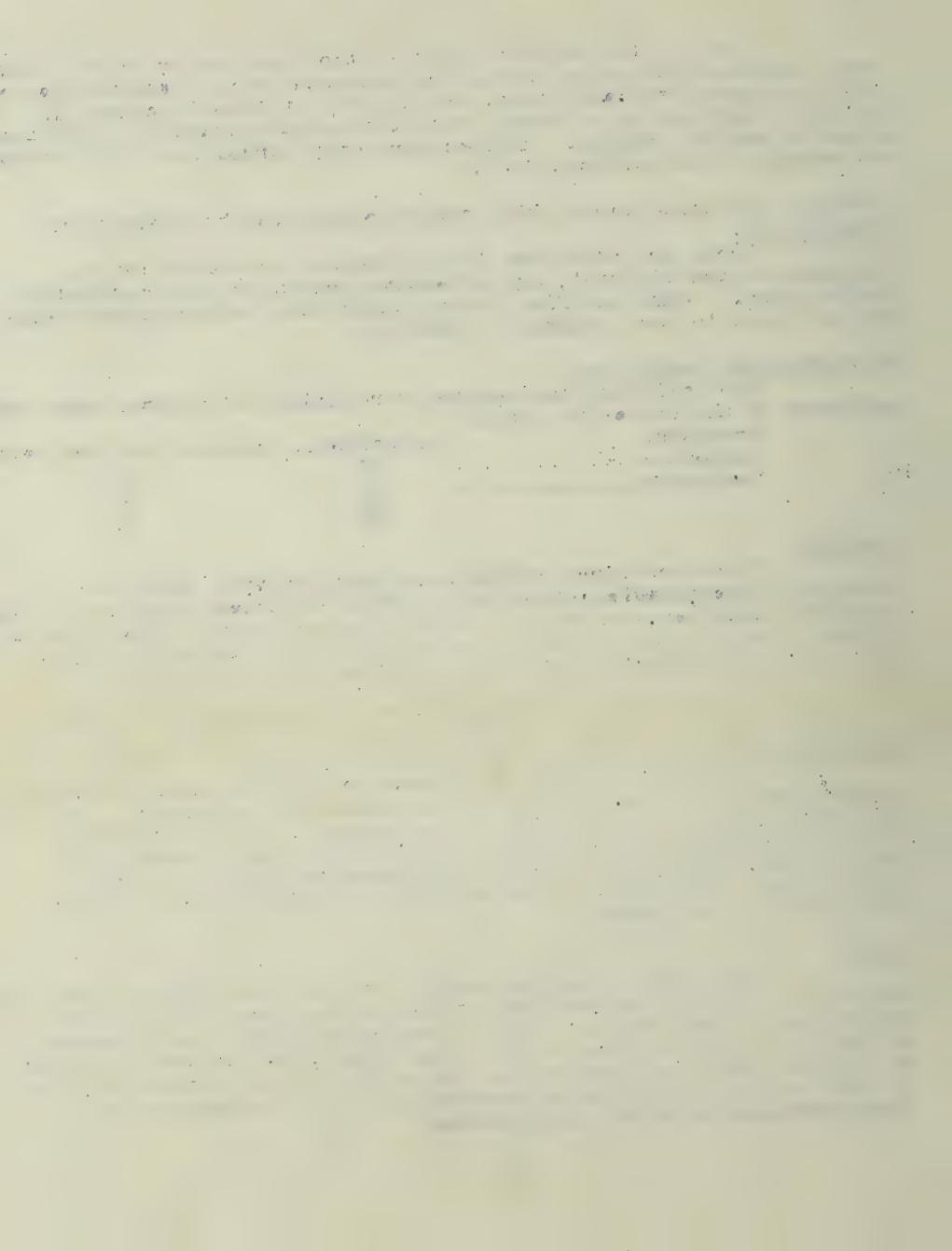
FOOD.

Milk Supply.

In Brierfield milk is in practically all cases delivered direct from the producing farm to the individual consumer. The deliveries are made once daily in the morning. In pre-war days two deliveries were made daily, and this was a great advantage in hot weather. The milk is quite wholesome in quality, and the supplies are adequate; and the cowsheds on the farms are kept in good sanitary condition.

Meat.

Very little imported meat is sold in the town, and most of the English meat is derived from cattle slaughtered in the town by the butchers themselves. This is inspected during the afternoon of the day on which slaughtering takes place, but no unsatisfactory or unsound meat has been found. No action has been necessary in regard to the destruction of unsound meat, and no carcasses have been despatched as being tuberculous.



In all cases the slaughterhouses themselves have been kept in good order, and every facility for inspection of the buildings themselves, the carcasses and the meat is invariably given to the inspector when necessary.

The total numbers of slaughterhouses in use in the Urban District is shown in the following table:

Slaughterhouses in use in 1914.....		6	
do,	do.	Jan 1920.....	5
do.	do.	Dec 1920.....	5

Other Foods.

It has not been found necessary to order the destruction of any unsound foods.

The bakehouses and inns, all premises used in connection with food production and distribution have throughout the year been kept in good sanitary condition.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The total number of cases of Infectious Diseases notified during 1920 was 68, and particulars with regard to them are set forth in the following table.

Diseases.	Cases notified	Removed to Hosp.	Deaths.	Deaths in Hosp.
Diphtheria.	8	1	-	-
Erysipelas.	5	-	-	-
Scarlet Fever.	12	5	-	-
Puerperal Fever.	1	-	1	1
Malaria.	3	-	-	-
Pneumonia.	24	-	14	-
Measles.	13	-	2	-
 Totals.	 68	 6	 17	 -

From those figures it will be seen that the incidence of Infectious Diseases in Brierfield has once again remained comparatively low, and Pneumonia has again been the cause of a large proportion of the cases and deaths.

The whole of the cases were notified at intervals spread over the whole of the year, and it has not been found necessary to order the closure of the schools.

In no instance have the number of cases notified taken the form of an epidemic. It has not been found necessary to order the closure of any of the schools.

Supplies of Diphtheria Anti-toxin are kept in the Public Health Department for the use of private practitioners, and in cases where specimens are sent to the analyst or pathologist as aids to diagnosis, the cost is defrayed by the Urban District Council.

Tuberculosis.

Drierfield is included in the Accrington Area of the Lancashire County Council for administrative work in connection with Tuberculosis. The Area is in charge of Dr. MacPhee, and Drierfield is covered by one of the County Nurses. Medical practitioners usually aid the work by prompt notification of all cases. Supplies of paper handkerchiefs and other antiseptic materials are kept in the Public Health Department for the use of resident patients.

Parts affected.	Lungs	Glands	Skin	Peroitoneum	Bones	Trachea	Spine	TOTAL
Cases at beginning of year.	19	5	1	3	8	1	-	38
Cases notified during the year.	11	4	-	2	7	-	1	18
Left the District.	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
Returned to Work.	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
Sanatorium.	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Deaths.	11	-	-	-	-	-	1	12

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

The report of the Health Visitor on her visits and a attendances for the year 1920 is as follows:-

Ante-Natal First Visits.....	88
do. Revisits.....	320
Birth First Visits.....	161
do. Revisits.....	1801
Child Welfare Revisits.....	1002
Measles.....	75
Still Birth Visits.....	5
Infantile Mortality Enquiries.....	4
Attendances at Inf.nt Welfare Centro.....	55
do. Sewing Class.....	56
do. for Sale of Virol and Glaxo.....	74
Total.....	2627

During the year the following special cases were dealt with: 26 cases of umbilical hernia, and 2 of scrotal hernia. Nineteen minor operations were performed; 17 of which were for phymosis, and two for abscess incisions. Ten cases of measles received massage treatment, and 4 further cases received both massage treatment and also medicated baths or unguents.

On Saturday, March 27th, the Infant Welfare Centre completed its period of tenancy at the premises in John Street, and on March 31st, the first meeting of the "Fabie Welcomer" was held at the Ambulance Hall in Crabtree Street. Necessary alterations had been made preparatory to the Child Welfare Department moving in. The building is now well adapted for the work for which it is now being used, and the extra accommodation provided has been especially appreciated.

The total numbers of Mothers and children attending the the Welfare Centro during the year were as below:

Expectant Mothers.....	43
Mothers	171
Children Infants under 1 year...	91
Children under 5 years.....	104

The Average attendances were:

Expectant Mothers.....	3.9
Mothers.....	50.1
Children Infants under 1 year...	37
Children under 5 years.....	

HOUSING.

There are 3125 dwelling houses in the Urban District, and of these 1950 are of the working classes type. No houses were erected during 1920.

Housing conditions in Brierfield are on the whole good, and while there is admittedly a shortage of housing accommodation no serious cases of overcrowding have been recorded. Previous to 1914 a number of important mill extinctions were in contemplation but the war followed by the present period of exorbitant building costs have prevented the carrying out of these schemes. It is not likely that the commencement of new industries, or the continuation of the present ill cause any appreciable influx of population in the near future.

During the year the Council have been carrying forward the preparatory steps of the Benthead housing scheme. The whole of the Benthead farm has been purchased, and ten acres have been reserved for housing purposes. The whole of the scheme allows for 100 houses, 50 of these to be erected immediately, and the rest within three years if it was found that these were required. The layout and house plans have been approved by the Ministry of Health, but no contract has yet been let.

Overcrowding.

There have been no recorded cases of serious overcrowding, and it has not been necessary to take any action with regard to cases of overcrowding during the year.

An important factor affecting the problem of overcrowding arises from the increased marriage rate during the past two years. Brierfield has followed suit with the other industrial districts, and a comparatively large number of marriages were recorded in 1919 and 1920, many of them no doubt in some measure a result of the wave of industrial prosperity which was then sweeping over the cotton industry. While an increased marriage rate points to increasing population, it would appear that more overcrowding could result. This is not however always the case. Newly married couples during the past two years have undoubtedly been put to some difficulty in finding suitable accommodation, and in many instances the home of one of the parents has been selected as being the best available place. It is reasonable to assume that the home with the greater available accommodation has been chosen, and we find therefore that two houses have been added to the needs of three families in the best possible way as a temporary expedient until other accommodation becomes available.

The universal shortage of houses has contributed largely towards the present over-crowding and it is fully expected that the Council's Housing Scheme, possibly aided by the operations of the almost forgotten private builder who may again take the field in view of the present and future falling costs, will rapidly relieve the present conditions.

Fitness of Houses.

The general standard of houses in the District is really good. Most of them are constructed of stone quarried in the neighbourhood, and, particularly in the case of the older houses, what they sadly lack from an aesthetic point of view is amply compensated for in the sheer solidity of construction. Ninety per cent of the houses are in blocks of more than two, and for this reason the chance of damp walls is greatly reduced. Access to the rear of these houses is obtained by means of paved back courts of ample width.

Most of the constructional defects, which are comparatively few, arise from the sanitary fittings such as oven cutters and downspouts, which after many years of use, gradually fail to maintain reasonable effectiveness, and so require repair or replacement. The work necessary in these cases is carried out by the owners of the houses, and their full co-operation in securing satisfaction in this direction is usually given.

Unhealthy Areas.

There are no unhealthy areas in Pierfield, but a small number of the houses of the older type are definitely below the standard at which we now aim.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

Weekly Returns of the Infectious Diseases notified have been sent to the Ministry of Health and to the Lancashire County Council, and each Quarter Returns of the Mortality and Infectious Diseases have been sent to the County Council, and Reports have been made to this Council. During the year I have made systematic inspections of the District.

Incorporated in the Report is Mr. Halstead's account of the Sanitary Inspection of the District, and also on the removal and destruction of refuse.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,



J. S. Wilson
Medical Officer of Health.

APPENDIXES.

HOUSING CONDITIONS.

1920, STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST. DECEMBER.

1.- GENERAL.

(1)	Estimated population.....	8764.
(2)	General Death Rate.....	11.1
(3)	Death Rate from Tuberculosis.....	1.25
(4)	Infantile Mortality.....	87
(5)	Number of dwelling houses of all classes.....	2125
(6)	Number of working class dwelling houses	1950
(7)	Number of new working-class houses erected.	None.

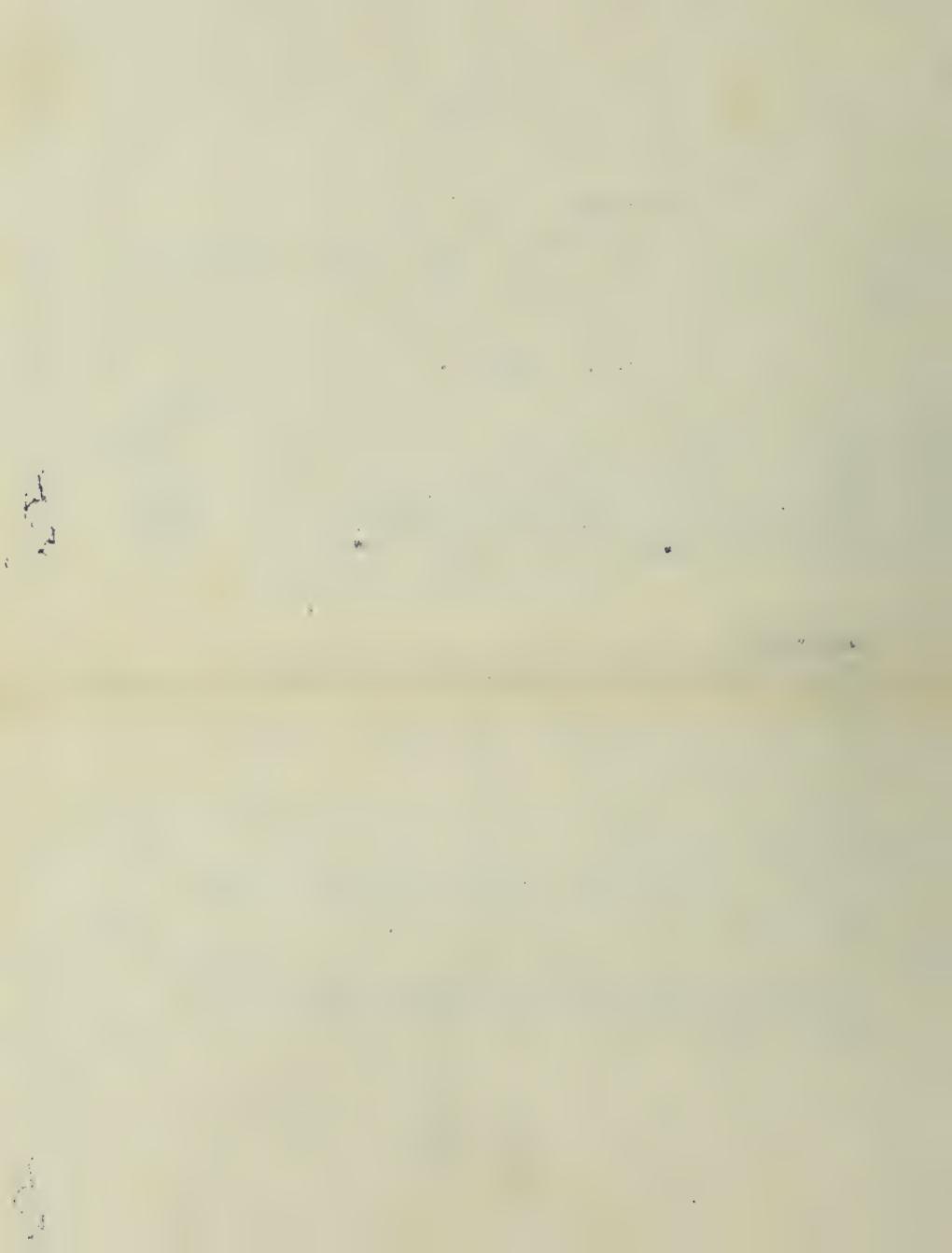
2.- UNFIT DWELLING HOUSES.

I. - Inspection.

(1)	Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts.	305
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District, Regulations, 1910.....	54
(3)	Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation.....	None.
(4)	Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation.....	None.

II. Remedy of Defects without Service of formal Notices.
Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal by the Local Authority or their officers.

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III. Action under Statutory Powers.

A. Proceedings under section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919.

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs.....	None.
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit (a) by owners	None.
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	None.
(3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intentions to close.....	None.

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied.....	None.
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied (a) by owners.....	None.
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	None.

C. Proceedings under sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1909.

(1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders.....	None.
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made.....	None.
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling houses having been rendered fit.. ..	None.
(4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made.....	None.
(5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	None.

3. - UNHEALTHY AREAS

Areas represented to the Local Authority with a view to Improvement Schemes under (a), Part I, or (b), Part II, of the Act 1890:-

(1) Name of area..... None.
(2) Acreage..... -
(3) Number of working-class houses in area..... -
(4) Number of working-class persons to be displaced. -

4.- Number of houses not complying with the building byelaws erected with consent of Local Authority under section 25 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919. None.

5.- Staff engaged on housing work, with briefly, the duties of each officer.

The Roads and Sewers, plans and quantities are in the hands of the permanent staff of the Council.

House plans, and quantities have been completed by private architects and quantity surveyors.



